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bearing upon this subject, and compared with the results deduced from each theory by the calculus; and the calculations themselves exhaust the highest powers of transcendental mathematics. In Optics, on the contrary, the properties and phenomena of light are alone considered, without regard to hypotheses; and the results, which are mostly obtained by the usual processes of calculation, being founded upon the data of exact experiment, are absolutely true, and cannot be affected by any modifications which the hypotheses may undergo. If, therefore, the one study be the more captivating to a philosophical student, and deserve a high place in a liberal course of education, the other, to which Newton almost exclusively confined his optical researches, is probably the more healthy discipline to the mind, and far the more important to him who designs to make a practical use of his knowledge. Professor Bartlett's work is, as its title implies, strictly a treatise on Optics. The unaffected freedom from pretension, with which it is offered to the world, prepossessed us strongly in its favor upon first opening it; and we rejoice in being able to say, that we have not been disappointed by a further examination, but that the simplicity of the entrance is a fair sample of the neatness of the interior. The whole theory of optical instruments, including the laws of the reflection, refraction, and dispersion of light, and the description of the eye, occupies about two-thirds of the volume, and is presented in a highly finished form. The phenomena of absorption, internal reflection, interference, divergence, double refraction, and polarization are explained in the remainder of the work with great distinctness and precision. The mathematical formulæ are, throughout, most happily and clearly exhibited; the deductions and explanations are highly perspicuous; and, in short, the entire arrangement and execution of the treatise are excellent, worthy of the distinguished reputation of its author, and exactly adapted to the class of students for whose use it was prepared.

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8 — *Man, in his Physical Structure and Adaptations.* By Robert Mudie, author of "The Heavens," "The Four Seasons," "The British Naturalist," etc. etc. Boston: Otis, Broaders, & Company. 1838. 12mo. pp. 294.

Mr. Robert Mudie, author of "The Heavens," of "The Four Seasons," and now of "Man," — whether a man of

flesh and blood like the late Dr. Mavor, or of straw, like the present Peter Parley,— is evidently a professed book-maker. It is not, that he has as yet published very many volumes; for many men who lived before booksellers remunerated, and penny-a-liners contracted, have written more and oftener. But it is, that he shows a desperate tendency to embrace all sorts of available subjects; that he hugs with artistic eagerness, every dilatable topic; that he manufactures volumes with colored plates, and compromises the purchasers of one little book, by concatenating it in a series with other little books. In short, though apparently a very good kind of man, it is evident, that he is in the habit of writing by contract.

In speaking of the present work, in connexion with three others to come hereafter,—namely, upon Intellectual, Moral, and Social Man, —he remarks; "They are my favorites, above all others I have written, and, whatever may be said of the execution, this subject deserves attention from the public." There can be no mistake in either of these propositions. It may, however be a question how far an author should announce his partialities for his own productions, at least to those who are likely to read the works which are the subject of self-gratulation; and it may also be doubted, whether the community required to be reminded that Man, in a physical, intellectual, moral, and social point of view, is a subject deserving of attention.

We have said that Mr. Mudie seems to be a good sort of of man; and we may add, that Mr. Mudie seems to know a good many things, and sometimes tells a little anecdote well. But, if we may give a classical form to a familiar word, he is one of the most severely *terebrating* authors that we have met with for a long time. Physical man, indeed! The book has nothing to do with any particular subject, but has a page here and a paragraph there, on almost every thing; and there is a viscosity about every thing this author touches, that makes it string out interminably. Half a dozen pages are taken up to show that dissections do not teach the nature of man. Nobody ever thought they did. He happens to mention the steam engine merely as an illustration; whereat the instinct of the book-wright whisks him through an episode of three pages. He alludes to the story of the ass between two bundles of hay, again as an illustration; but the seducing image of his approving bibliopolite once more leads him from his path, and some fifteen or twenty shillings' worth of copy is evolved before the reader can be released from his speculations upon the asinine dilemma.

And so on through the whole book. Dulness, benevolence, prolixity, with here and there a tolerable story, and a few sensible remarks, — a little physiology, — a little comparative anatomy, — a little metaphysics — a great deal of skimble-skamble stuff, — and you have finished the first fraction of Mr. Mudie's quadruple infliction.

We, whose duty it is to go through these dense and unwedgeable masses of print, like a pod-auger, — boring and bored, — must show the chips we bring away fairly and fully to the public. In the present instance, we must needs report that the book is done by the job, — conscientiously and with the best of motives, no doubt; the author firmly believing, that he can serve both God and Mammon in the same duodecimo. It is not our fault, that he has no more capacity for the subjects which he handles; and, dearly as we love the booksellers, the truth must be told, though it should condemn "The Heavens" to fall — ninety-nine per cent., "The Seasons" to remain stationary on the counters, and "Man" to become the slave of grocers and trunk-makers.

Independently of these general remarks, we may indulge in one or two suggestions as to the style of this little work. As punctuation is but a small item in the expense of getting up a work, it may be well in the future duodecimos to insert a period occasionally in the midst of a page, and embellish the word which follows, with a capital. Except in contracts and similar pieces of composition, we do not like to hear people called "the parties," — a word to which Mr. Mudie has a partiality that smacks of some previous employment. It is not proper to use such words as "adaptorial" and "transmogrifier," nor, in the present advanced state of civilization, is it any longer considered original or genteel to exclaim,

"O for a lodge in some vast wilderness," &c.

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9. — *The Life of William Cowper, Esq.* By Robert Southey, LL. D., Poet Laureate, etc. In two Volumes. Boston: Otis, Broaders, & Co. 1839. 12mo. pp. 329, 360.

We have already noticed this Life at some length, in connexion with a general review of Cowper's character.* We refer to it now merely to express our satisfaction at seeing the Life separated from the works, and republished among

* See *North American Review*, Vol. XLIV. pp. 29, *et seq.*